

Regional Administrator hosts border tour to see accomplishments and discuss plans to meet the challenges remaining

Regional Administrator Richard E. Greene was host to EPA Chief Financial Officer Charlie Johnson, Tad Gallion, representing the House Appropriations Committee, and EPA International Affairs Deputy Jerry Clifford on a tour of the U.S. Mexico border. The tour highlighted many successful projects including the Juarez water plants designed to assist 1.5 million people. It also presented an overview of ongoing border challenges, especially water and wastewater infrastructure needs, which EPA is working to address.

The group was joined by Border Environment Cooperation Commission General Manager Fernando Macias and Deputy Javier Cabrera, as the tour started early in the morning with a bird's-eye view of the area from the top of the Franklin Mountains. The Commission is a binational agency that works directly with communities in the 200-kilometer-wide border region. Its action priorities are drinking water, sewage, sanitation and municipal solid-waste management.

The tour also included stops in several communities facing unique environmental challenges, including the largest known collection of used tires in the border area - four million tires and growing. Because they provide a lush breeding ground for disease-spreading mosquitoes, other insects and rodents, the massive tire piles pose a health problem for residents on both sides of the border.

Plans for disposing of these tires were explained as part of several presentations the group heard from local officials. They described their plans to address environmental challenges facing their communities, and the continuing need for government support.

